

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 /091 W
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R 300658Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8878
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 8502

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PGOV PK
SUBJ: BIZENJO ON BALUCH AUTONOMY

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 7366 (B) ISLAMABAD 7428

1. SUMMARY: FORMER GOVERNOR OF BALUCHISTAN BIZENJO HELD A
PROVOCATIVE PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 28 IN LAHORE IN WHICH HE:
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--SUGGESTED THAT THE NATION SCRAP THE 1973 CONSTITUTION SINCE
IT IS NOW UNTENABLE;

--URGED REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT ORDER WITH A TRULY "FEDERAL"
SYSTEM IN WHICH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WOULD MAINTAIN ONLY
DEFENSE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CENTRAL FISCAL AUTHORITY WHILE

MAXIMUM AUTONOMY WOULD BE PLACED IN THE FEDERATED UNITS;

--RESURRECTED THE THEORY OF "FOUR NATIONALITIES" AS THE BASIS OF
A PAKISTANI POLITY AND AS THE NATURAL DIVISIONS OF THE NATION;

--CHALLENGED THE EXISTENCE OF A "MUSLIM NATION" OF PAKISTAN,
SAYING THOSE WHO TRY TO PERPETUATE THE IDEA OF THE UNIFYING POWER
OF ISLAM DO SO FOR THEIR OWN VESTED INTERESTS AND;

--HARKENED BACK TO PAKISTAN'S FOUNDER, MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH, AS
HIS AUTHORITY IN ASSERTING THAT TRUE FEDERALISM WITH MAXIMUM
PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY WAS THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE FOUNDERS OF
THE STATE.

BIZENJO'S STATEMENTS WILL BE WIDELY SEEN HERE AS A POSSIBLE
PRELUDE TO A REPETITION OF THE 1970-71 TRAGEDY WHICH LED TO THE
SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN. END SUMMARY.

2. MIR GHAS BAKHS BIZENJO, FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF
BALUCHISTAN AND ONE OF THREE RECOGNIZED LEADERS OF THE BALUCH
PEOPLE, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 28 IN LAHORE. THE
THRUST OF HIS REMARKS, WHICH HAVE A CHILLINGLY FAMILIAR RING,
WAS A RENEWED CALL FOR AUTONOMY FOR BALUCHISTAN WITHIN A NEW
FEDERAL STRUCTURE. HE CALLED THE 1973 CONSTITUTION "NO LONGER
TENABLE" AND URGED A NEW CONSTITUTION IN WHICH THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT WOULD HOLD AUTHORITY ONLY IN THE FIELDS OF DEFENSE,
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FOREIGN RELATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, TAXATION AND CURRENCY.

3. BIZENJO CIRCULATED A FOUR-PAGE WRITTEN STATEMENT IN WHICH HE
OUTLINES HIS THEORIES ON THE "FOUR NATIONALITIES" AS THE BASIS
FOR PROVINCIAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY. IT IS THE UNIQUE
PERSONALITIES AND RIGHTS OF THESE FOUR GROUPS WHICH MUST BE
PROTECTED, BIZENJO SAYS, IN A NEW SYSTEM OF "CAST IRON
GUARANTEES" FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8879

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT PARA FIVE

4. BIZENJO ACCUSED HIS OPPONENTS OF TRYING TO DEBUNK HIS "FOUR NATIONALITIES" THEORY WITH THEIR OWN THEORY THAT PAKISTAN IS "ONE MUSLIM NATION." THIS, HE SAYS, IS NOT VALID AND HE USES REFERENCES FROM THE HOLY QURAN AND FROM THE LAHORE RESOLUTION OF 1940 AS HIS AUTHORITY. HE FURTHER INSISTED "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN IDEOLOGY OF PAKISTAN" -- NO SUCH CONCEPT WAS ABROAD IN THE LAND, HE INDICATES, UNTIL THE TIME OF YAHYA KHAN.

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5. IN ANSWER TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BIZENJO SAID THAT, UNDER HIS PLAN, THE FEDERATED UNITS WOULD HAVE CONTROL OVER THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES (READ GAS REVENUES FOR BALUCHISTAN) BUT WOULD SURRENDER TAXING POWERS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO CONTENTED THAT HIS POSITION ON REGIONAL AUTONOMY DID NOT CONSTITUTE "THE PREACHING OF SECESSION" SINCE THE POSITION ONLY RECOGNIZES THE HISTORIC AND GEOGRAPHIC REALITIES OF PAKISTAN.

6. BIZENJO ARTICULATELY URGES A "DISPASSIONATE ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER THE REASONS WE HAVE FAILED TO BECOME A WELL-KNIT NATION."

7. IN A COMPANION PIECE TO HIS PRESS STATEMENTS, BIZENJO RECENTLY

PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE IN THE LEFTIST WEEKLY "VIEWPOINT" IN WHICH HE BITTERLY ATTACKS CMLA ZIA'S NEW CIVILIAN CABINET GOVERNMENT AND OUTLINES HIS OWN PROPOSALS FOR PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FUTURE. IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE THESE PROPOSALS ARE GENERALLY STATIST AND PROGRESSIVE WHILE POLITICALLY THEY REFLECT HIS LEFTIST ORIENTATION.

8. COMMENT: BIZENJO IS ONE-THIRD OF THE TRIUMVIRATE OF BALUCHI SARDARS (THE OTHERS BEING KHAIR MARRI AND ATAULLAH MENGAL) WHO LEAD THE LARGEST TRIBAL GROUPS IN THE PROVINCE. THEY WERE ALL IMPRISONED BY BHUTTO FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND RELEASED IN 1977 BY GENERAL ZIA. THE THREE HELD EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH THE CMLA RECENTLY IN AN ATTEMPT BY ZIA TO DEFUSE THE TENSIONS IN BALUCHISTAN (REFTELS). THE APRIL COUP IN KABUL HAS EMBOLDENED THE BALUCHI LEADERS TO PRESS THEIR CALLS FOR LOCAL AUTONOMY, APPARENTLY IN THE BELIEF THAT ASSISTANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM THE AFGHAN SIDE OF THE FRONTIER IF ISLAMABAD AGAIN TRIED TO SUPPRESS THEIR EFFORTS.

THE BIZENJO PRESS CONFERENCE AND "VIEWPOINT" ARTICLE REPRESENT
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FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES TO THE MLA REGIME AND WILL BE WIDELY VIEWED AS PRESAGING A POSSIBLE REPETITION OF THE 1970-71 TRAGEDY WHICH LED TO THE SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN.

WHILE GENERAL ZIA'S REACTION TO BIZENJO'S CHALLENGE IS YET TO APPEAR, THE ESCALATION OF PRESSURE ON THE CENTER TO ALLOW MORE AUTONOMY TO BALUCHISTAN COULD FURTHER COMPLICATE EFFORTS FOR A RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

THE EMBASSY HOPES TO OBTAIN COPIES OF BIZENJO'S FULL STATEMENT AND INTENDS TO ANALYZE MORE FULLY BIZENJO'S PROPOSALS, HIS MOTIVATIONS IN THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET AT THIS TIME, AND OFFICIAL AND POLITICAL REACTIONS.
HUMMEL

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